

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES FOR
DEVELOPMENT



TOWN OF GREECE

May 2007

Contents:

Purpose.....Page 2

Definitions.....2

General Principles.....3

Specific Requirements3

 Portion of site to be landscaped3

 Design and certification4

 Materials, installation, quality standards5

 Significant existing vegetation.....6

 Buffering and screening.....7

 Street trees in residential subdivisions.....7

Maintenance.....7

Enforceability.....7

Appendices:

Protecting Trees During Construction 8 & 9

Landscape Certificate of Compliance.....10

- 1) Purpose: The purpose of these guidelines is to establish a consistent standard for landscape design and installation for development in the Town of Greece.

Landscaping should be designed in accordance with the guidelines established herein and shall be subject to site plan approval by the Planning Board. Variations from any standard in these guidelines may be permitted or required by the Planning Board.

- 2) Definitions – from Section 211-5 of the Town of Greece Code (“The Zoning Ordinance”)

- A) Buffer area: An area bordering the zoning district boundary between any two zoning districts and designated by the Planning Board as an area reserved for plantings, fencing or other similar screening devices for the purpose of creating a transition area wherein adjoining uses do not detract from one another.
- B) Certificate of Occupancy: A document issued by the Building Inspector which signifies that a building or addition thereto and site comply with all applicable regulations of the Town of Greece and Title 19 NYCRR (Building Codes of New York State) and all plans and specifications for said building or addition and site.
- C) Certified Nursery Professional (CNP): A landscape professional having successfully completed the examination for, and continuously maintains their status in, the Certified Nursery Professional Program administered by the New York State Nursery and Landscape Association. A current list of registered CNPs is available on the Internet at <http://rochesterlandscapers.com/services/cnpd.php>
- D) Green space: Includes the concepts of open space, landscaped area, landscape buffer and landscape screen.
- E) Landscape area: The area required or permitted under this chapter to be devoted to live plants, which may include existing and new vegetation, berms, detention or retention ponds, lighting, curbed islands, street furnishings and ornamental features which are integrated with the vegetation.
- F) Landscape buffer: Trees and shrubs used to visually soften views.
- G) Landscape guidelines: Guidelines [herein] available for reference to the general public from the Department of Development Services which should be used as an aid in the preparation of commercial, industrial and multiple-family residential site plans.
- H) Landscape screen: Trees and shrubs used to block views.
- I) Licensed Landscape Architect: An individual licensed by the New York State Education Department’s Office of Professions to perform services further described in Title VIII of the New York State Education Law. (refer to Title VIII for legal definition).
- J) Lawn area: An area planted with grass and regularly mowed to maintain a height of no more than 5 inches.

3) General Principles:

- A) As a general rule, at least 30% of new or redeveloped commercial and industrial sites, and 50% of multi-family residential sites, should be devoted to landscape areas, designed in accordance with these guidelines.
- B) Landscape design, and certification of proper installation, should be provided by a Licensed Landscape Architect or Certified Nursery Professional as described herein.
- C) Landscape materials used, plant species selection, and installation procedures should be in accordance with standards established herein.
- D) For sites with significant existing vegetation, the Applicant should consult a designated representative of the Town's Tree Council as early in the planning process as possible.
- E) Buffering between different land uses may be required by the Planning Board.
- F) Single-family residential subdivisions should provide one (1) street tree in the tree lawn of each proposed interior building lot, and two (2) for corner lots. Street trees required by the Planning Board should be included in the Letter of Credit for public improvements.
- G) Ensuring the quality and proper installation of landscaping is the responsibility of the developer. Long-term maintenance of landscaping will ultimately be the responsibility of the property owner.

4) Specific Requirements:

- A) Portion of site to be landscaped: The extent of available space to be landscaped on a site is dependant largely on the lot coverage, setbacks, and parking requirements established in the Zoning Ordinance. The remaining area should be devoted to landscaping unless otherwise permitted or required by the Planning Board.
 - I) It is recommended that at least 30% of commercial and industrial sites be landscaped in accordance with these guidelines.
 - II) It is recommended that at least 50% of multi-family residential sites be landscaped in accordance with these guidelines.
 - III) It is recommended that 5% of parking areas over 1 acre be designed as landscaped islands and/or medians.
 - IV) Disturbed areas on a site plan that are designated for future development should be planted to grass and maintained as lawn areas unless otherwise permitted or required by the Planning Board.

B) Landscape design and certification:

I) Landscape design:

(1) New or redeveloped commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential site plan applications for 1 or more buildings, greater than 10,000 square feet in size AND on a lot larger than 2 acres, shall include a landscape plan developed and stamped by a New York State Licensed Landscape Architect. For applications involving a single building less than 10,000 square feet in size AND on a lot of less than 2 acres, landscape plans shall be developed in consultation with a Certified Nursery Professional (CNP). Proof of CNP review shall be provided.

(2) Acceptable landscape plans shall include at least the following:

(a) Plant schedule including:

(i) Symbol and common and botanical name of plants used

(ii) Size and spacing requirements of plants used

(b) % of green space existing and proposed for the site as a whole

(c) % of parking areas devoted to landscaping

(d) Snow storage areas

(e) Planting and installation details.

(f) Show the limit of clearing. Existing vegetation should be noted on the plan as “to remain” or “to be removed”.

(g) Details of tree protection methods; see page 8

(h) Any other information that may impact the landscape design including overhead and underground utilities, or any other information deemed necessary by the Planning Board.

II) Certification of installation: Prior to the issuance of a Final Certificate of Occupancy for the Premises, developers of commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential sites shall provide certification verifying proper installation of landscape areas on the site, in accordance with the landscape plan approved by the Planning Board, and in accordance these guidelines. Said certification shall be provided on the attached certification form (page 10), completed by a Licensed Landscape Architect or Certified Nursery Professional.

C) Landscape materials / installation / quality standards:

- I) Plant size: Plant sizes shall be as follows unless otherwise required or permitted by the Planning Board.
 - (1) Deciduous shade trees and ornamental trees shall have a caliper of at least 1.75 – 2 inches upon installation.
 - (2) Multiple-trunk trees shall have a minimum of 3 trunks, which average 6 feet in height upon installation.
 - (3) Coniferous trees shall have a minimum height of 5 feet upon planting.
 - (4) Shrubs shall be a minimum of 18 inches in height or width.
- II) Plant placement and spacing: Plant spacing should be based on the space requirements of individual species and in recognition of their full growth potential.
 - (1) Plants should be spaced from one another so as to allow for full potential growth of the particular species. In the case of buffering, additional room may be needed in the plans so that plants can be staggered.
 - (2) Plants should not be placed where they will interfere with site drainage, paved areas or sidewalks, underground or overhead utilities, or any associated easements.
 - (3) Snow storage areas should be limited to planting of grass.
 - (4) Landscape islands should be provided in parking lots to channel traffic and create visual and climatic relief in large expanses of pavement. The use of shade trees is encouraged within parking lots. Species selection is of particular importance in these harsh growing conditions due to excessive heat, dry soil conditions, road salt accumulation, and snow plowing.
- III) Plant selection: Plant selection should be determined in consultation with a Licensed Landscape Architect or Certified Nursery Professional. A number of factors come into play when selecting the appropriate plant for different locations of the site.
 - (1) Salt tolerance: Road salt is a common factor in the demise of landscape plantings. Plantings near roadways, parking lots, and in areas that receive drainage from those portions of the site should be selected based in part on their salt tolerance.
 - (2) Plants on berms and sloped areas: The shallow root structures of certain trees are not suited for planting on slopes or on top of berms.
 - (3) Site distances: Refer to Section 211-33 of the Zoning Ordinance.

IV) Suitable nursery stock:

- (1) Nursery stock shall meet or exceed quality standards established in the current edition of American Standard for Nursery Stock, published by the American Association of Nurserymen, Washington D.C.
- (2) Nursery stock should be transported, staged, and otherwise handled in accordance with standards established in American Standard for Nursery Stock.
- (3) Nursery stock should be obtained from a reputable nursery within Hardiness zone 4, 5, or 6 as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture.

V) Berm consistency:

- (1) Earthen berms should be constructed of stable soils that are low in organic matter, should have a slope no steeper than 3 on 1, and should be covered with 6 inches of suitable topsoil unless otherwise required or permitted by the Planning Board.
- (2) Plantings: The shallow root structures of certain trees are not suited for planting on slopes or on top of berms. Plant selection should be determined in consultation with a Licensed Landscape Architect or Certified Nursery Professional.

D) Existing mature trees: For sites with existing mature trees, the Applicant should consult the Town's Tree Council as early in the planning process as possible.

- I) Existing mature trees should be incorporated into development plans to the greatest degree practicable. Refer to pages 8 and 9 for tree protection methods.
- II) On recommendations from the Town's Tree Council, the Planning Board may require that existing mature trees, or treed areas, be preserved.
- III) The Planning Board may require compensation for the removal of trees within the Town's Woodlot Inventory as designated by the Tree Council.

- E) Buffering and screening: Landscape areas can be used to provide buffering between land uses.
 - I) A landscape buffer is defined in the Zoning Ordinance as a landscape area used to soften views. A landscape buffer should be used to provide a visual *transition* between land uses.
 - II) A landscape screen is defined in the Zoning Ordinance as a landscape area used to block views. A landscape screen should be used to provide a visual *barrier* between land uses.
 - III) Service areas, loading docks, storage areas, utility equipment, heating, ventilating and air conditioning equipment, and outdoor refuse containers are all examples of site plan elements that should be screened from public view, particularly when such areas are visible from residential property, roadways, or other public places.
 - IV) Proper plant spacing should be considered when designing a landscape buffer or screen so as to accommodate the full growth potential of the plants being used. In the case of buffering, additional room may be needed in the plans so that plants can be staggered.
- F) Street trees in residential subdivisions: Single-family residential subdivisions should provide one (1) street tree in the tree lawn of each proposed interior building lot, and two (2) for corner lots.
 - I) Street trees required by the Planning Board should be included in the Letter of Credit for public improvements.
 - II) Street trees shall be selected from the Town's Master Tree List available from the Department of Public Works.
 - III) No fewer than 3 different species of street tree should be selected for use in any subdivision.
- 5) Maintenance:
 - A) Quality and proper installation of landscaping is the responsibility of the Applicant.
 - B) Maintenance of landscaping is the responsibility of the current property owner. Replacement of dead or dying plants is a standard condition of Planning Board approvals.
- 6) Enforceability: Landscape areas required or permitted by the Planning Board are elements of the approved site plan, and as such are subject to enforcement under Section 211-37 of the Zoning Ordinance (Site Plan compliance) and Section 157 of the Town of Greece Code (Property Maintenance).
 - A) Post approval changes of the landscape layout or plant species specified in the landscape plan can be done via change order submitted to the Planning Board Clerk. Extensive or substantial changes may require additional review and approval by the Planning Board.

PROTECTING TREES DURING CONSTRUCTION

The primary reason that trees in new development die is construction related. The health of those trees, which live, is directly related to the extent of the damage to their roots during the disturbance of earth. Generally, any change to the root zone greater than 35 percent will precipitate the unrecoverable decline of trees. It is the responsibility of the developer/contractor to protect all trees that are located within the project limits to minimize any possible damage due to construction activities. The following guidelines will help assure tree preservation during construction.

1. Trees to be preserved should be protected with fences. Fences protect trees from cutting, breaking, skinning, and bruising of tree roots, bark and branches. Fencing recommended for use is the fluorescent orange construction safety fence, 4 feet in height. Protective fencing must be installed before any construction activities begin and should remain in place until final grading and seeding operations are performed. Trees should be fenced so as to encompass the entire tree canopy. In no case should the fencing be less than 2 feet from the edge of the tree.
2. In order to prevent smothering of the tree root system, construction, excavation materials and topsoil must not be stockpiled under a tree's canopy.
3. In order to avoid soil and root zone compaction, vehicles and construction equipment must not be parked over any tree root system.
4. Construction equipment must not be left idling under a tree's canopy.
5. As much as possible, avoid digging under a tree's canopy.
6. If digging is unavoidable within the root zone, tunneling is preferable to trenching. Tunnels should be located according to the following table:

| TREE DIAMETER (DBH) | MINIMUM DISTANCE OF TUNNEL FROM TREE TRUNK (FT) | MINIMUM DEPTH OF TUNNEL (FT) |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| less than 10" | 6 | 2 1/2 |
| 10" to 14" | 10 | 3 |
| 15" to 19" | 12 | 3 1/2 |
| 20" and greater | 15 | 4 |

7. Where tree root cutting is conducted, it must be with sharp cutting tools. Exposed tree roots must be backfilled as soon as possible. If roots must be exposed for a long period of time, they should be covered with burlap to prevent excessive loss of moisture. When burlap is used, it must be kept wet until the roots can be re-buried. There is no need to paint or treat the cut root ends.

8. Where extensive cutting of a tree root system has occurred, it is essential the tree root system receive between 1/2 inch and 1 inch of water on a weekly basis. When weather conditions are consistently dry and when less than 1/2 inch of rain has fallen during any given week, the developer/contractor needs to apply at least 1/2 inch of water on the tree root system.
9. Care should be taken to avoid any permanent changes in the surface level of soil under the tree as a result of construction. When the grade level is changed by removing soil from the top of the roots or by adding soil over the top of the roots, the tree has difficulty obtaining required amounts of air, water and minerals. Minor filling (6 inches or less in depth) will not harm most species of trees if the fill is good topsoil, high in organic matter and loamy in texture. Major grade changes require that air be supplied to the roots. This may be done by welling around a tree or installing a layer of gravel and a system of drain tiles over the roots of the tree. Protecting a tree from lowered grade can be achieved by terracing or building a retaining wall, if necessary.

Prepared by the Town of Greece Environmental Board, March, 1995.

References:

1. Protecting Trees From Excavation Damage, NYSDEC
2. Protecting Shade Trees During Home Construction, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Home and Garden Bulletin #104
3. Trenching & Tunneling Near Trees, The National Arbor Day Foundation
4. City of Rochester, A. Pleninger, City Planner

REVISED 3/95

LANDSCAPE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

(To be completed by a New York State Licensed Landscape Architect or Certified Nursery Professional)

Project name _____

Address _____

☐ **The landscaping on the site is complete.**

I represent that the landscaping has been installed in substantial compliance with the approved landscaping plan and in accordance with standards set forth in the **Town of Greece Landscape Guidelines for Development**.

I personally inspected said landscaping on _____ and I have verified that all landscape plantings are correct as to their location, size, number, and species, and that all materials and installation procedures used are in accordance with the **landscape plan approved by the Planning Board** and standards set forth in the **Town of Greece Landscape Guidelines for Development**.

- or -

☐ **Posting a Letter of Credit for incomplete landscaping**

X

Signature of New York State Licensed Landscape Architect or Certified Nursery Professional / Date